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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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DUSTS CAUSE UNHEALTHY AIR NEAR BUFFALO

DES MOINES — Dusts caused unhealthy air quality earlier in the week in an isolated area near Buffalo, located along the Mississippi River in southwestern Scott County, DNR officials announced today.

The air conditions were measured on Monday and the monitor readings were validated on Wednesday.

Based on the national Air Quality Index, or AQI, the air quality reached 109, a level considered unhealthy for sensitive groups such as persons with respiratory disease due to elevated particulates or dusts. Typically, extended and prolonged outdoor exertion is also needed to increase respiratory risks during such conditions.

An AQI of 1 to 50 is green or good, 51 to 100 is yellow or moderate, 101 to 150 is orange or unhealthy for sensitive groups, 151 to 200 is red, unhealthy for everyone. Rarely monitored are purple for very unhealthy (201 to 300) and maroon for hazardous (301 to 500.)

“The conditions were confined to a small, isolated area along the river adjacent large scale mining, quarrying and other dust generating activities,” said Brian Button, a spokesman for the DNR.

Button said facilities engaged in storage, quarrying and handling of dust generating materials in the area should be following plans to control emissions from storage piles, haul roads and kiln smokestacks.

The DNR is further investigating the cause and will check operating conditions of facilities in the area.

For more information contact Brian Button at 515-281-7832.

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PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS RESULTS OF LAKE DARLING BACTERIA STUDY

BRIGHTON — A public meeting will be held Sept. 29 in Brighton to discuss results from an ongoing DNR study that is working to determine the source of high bacteria levels at Lake Darling.

Over the past year, the DNR has conducted a source-tracking project in the Lake Darling watershed, which has had a history of high bacteria levels at the beach and in the lake. At the public meeting, DNR staff will discuss several source-tracking methods that were used to identify sources of bacteria and will be available for a question and answer session.

The meeting will be held at the Brighton Community Center at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 29.

For more information, contact Janice Boekhoff at (319) 931-6050 or Eric O'Brien at (319) 335-1575.

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MANURE MANAGEMENT KEY TO AVOIDING DAMAGE TO ENVIRONMENT

DES MOINES -- Recent rains and manure releases have emphasized the importance of good management and reporting manure releases to the DNR promptly.

“It’s possible that good management, quick action and quick reporting of a manure release to the DNR averted a fish kill in in Plymouth County,” said Ken Hessenius, supervisor of the Spencer DNR field office.

Producer Alan Feuerhelm who owns Plymouth Dairy Farms south of LeMars reported a release to the DNR after a pipe plugged and caused an overflow from a manure storage structure on Tuesday night.

The overflowing manure ran to a terraced area. Because Feuerhelm had been land applying manure, he had an alternative place to put the overflow and he pumped it into two earthen holding basins. Some manure overflowed and leaked through the terrace,

causing elevated ammonia levels in an unnamed tributary to Plymouth Creek that flows into the Floyd River.

Hessenius was at the farm Wednesday and was concerned about high ammonia levels in the stream below the farm, but no dead fish had been found by Thursday morning.

“We’ve had so much rain that it’s been difficult for producers to get into fields or to empty out their manure storage areas, but the best alternative for people in this situation is to call the DNR,” Hessenius said.

“Because we deal with so many of these situations, sometimes we can see a solution or an alternative that the producer hasn’t thought of,” he added.

Hessenius said that’s particularly important for large facilities because they have the potential to cause large problems.

In another case in northwest Iowa, Hessenius said the producer had a number of alternatives, but the one he chose resulted in a fish kill.

If we’d been contacted, we would have probably recommended hauling some of the manure or creating some type of temporary storage to prevent the overflow, he said. Instead, the producer decided to pump manure out of the basin and it ran straight into a stream.

Producers with an actual or imminent release should contact the DNR field offices at one of the following numbers:

- Northeast Iowa, Manchester office, (563) 927-2640
- North Central Iowa, Mason City office, (641) 424-4073
- Northwest Iowa, Spencer office, (712) 262-4177
- Southwest Iowa, Atlantic office, (712) 243-1934
- South Central Iowa, Des Moines office, (515) 725-0268
- Southeast Iowa, Washington office, (319) 653-2135

After hours and on weekends, producers can call the 24-hour hotline at (515) 281-8694.

For more information, contact Ken Hessenius at (712) 262-4177 or Karen Grimes, (515) 281-5135.

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NEW MANURE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND RECORDS FORMS AVAILABLE

DES MOINES – The DNR has a new form available for manure management plans – one that incorporates the phosphorus index, but can still be used for nitrogen-based plans.

Most confinement feeding operations are not required to use this form until they submit their annual updates starting in the fall of 2008. However, all original (first-time submittals) manure management plans must be developed using the phosphorus index and the new form starting Oct. 25, 2004.

“We think this manure management plan form is much easier to use than the old form, so we’re encouraging producers to switch to the new form,” said Jeremy Klatt, a DNR nutrient specialist. “You can use the new form without using the phosphorus portion until you want to use it or until it’s required.”

The plan incorporates one new table that gives phosphorus content in manure from different species. The DNR revised reference materials, too, to update yield data and other table values.

“An Excel version of the MMP is also available that will do the calculations for you when you provide the inputs,” Klatt added.

The new MMP form is available on the DNR Web site at www.iowadnr.com or specifically at <http://www.state.ia.us/epd/wastewtr/feedlot/manure.htm>.

A new MMP recordkeeping form includes requirements that went into effect on August 25, 2004. The use of this form is optional, but Klatt encourages producers to look at it to see if it will meet their needs. That form can be found at <http://www.state.ia.us/epd/wastewtr/feedlot/feedlt.htm>.

Changes in state law in 2002 require livestock producers to use the phosphorus index to determine the risk that phosphorus will leave the field when manure is applied to the land as fertilizer. The phosphorus or P index considers erodibility of the soils, distance to a stream and soil test results for phosphorus, among other factors.

For more information, contact Jeremy Klatt, DNR nutrient specialist, at (515) 281-8690.